FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

Volume XIX, Number 4, August 1968

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Our purpose: To promote the practice of prayer among all religious faiths whose fundamental belief is in God, regardless of race, creed, or color, and whose tenets include the universal attributes of truth, honesty, justice and mercy, that thereby there may arise a closer relation to Almighty God and a deeper spirit of fellowship among mankind.

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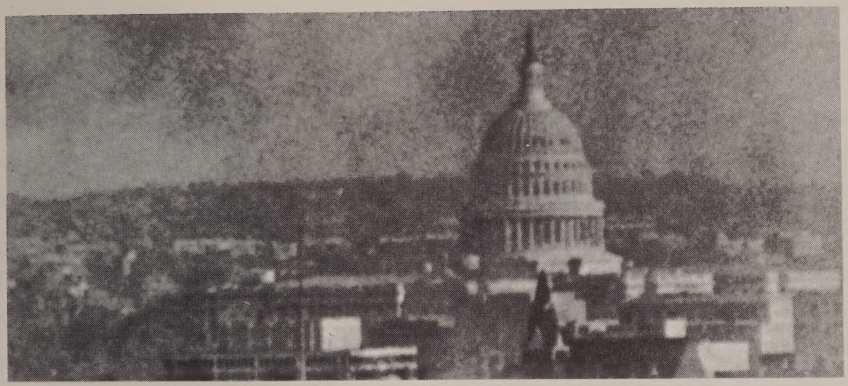


GUEST EDITORIAL

Carla Patsuris

The word *violence* as it has been used seems to mean *evil violence* rather than that of will and power to survive.

America a violent nation? There is evidence contrary to this in the fact that it has seen good men carrying the banners of justice who have been slain. . . .Who then is Cain?

We know we are not a violent people when we watch the world of workers who toil on endlessly even at the sacrifice of ease and pleasures...each being useful. Violent? These millions of people who are far too wearied from the labor of keeping the order of the day and the business of order in action?

To ride the boulevards and avenues of any city or hamlet or even to travel on foot the lanes through open country, to see the homes and gardens, the factories, the farms and live-stock is to rejoice in the growth of the constructive and the useful that goes

into the making of America.

Our accusers need to change the direction of their gaze and they need to learn to see what they are seeing. Oh yes, we have the sick and the violent among us, but this is why we have doctors and hospitals and Law makers and jails...I am not expecting an Eden devoid of adders, for even I—the product of a pioneer grandfather, great-grandfather and great-great-grandfather—know that gardens grow weeds. But I know, also, that there never was a weed plot yet where flowers could not be found.

When certain ones aim attention to *gloom, sickness, evil* (they are all on the same channel), I like to review many of the Bible-parables: they help us to know that what might seem to be utterly impossible can be accomplished.

Perhaps those most to be pitied are the sick ones who have lost sight and memory of beauty and hope. Let us believe, then, that bearers of the banner *vision* along with *all the green goodness growing* can so flourish faith that humanity and time will withstand the bitter fruit that destroys the branch but not the root.

Then let *us*, image-makers, start *now* to build a healthier heritage through the children, for *they* are the future citizens and parents of generations yet to come. Children should *Now* be educated in the joys of giving love and gentleness.

If only man might be helped to realize his unity with holiness, for *it is the power that spins universes out of itself centers itself in man!*

No, we are not a violent nation...nor is any nation of men violent. Each is that *spinning energy* and, of course, energy can be used to create the good or the bad.

EDITORIAL

The guest editorial which appears on the previous pages came to us, as a letter from a longtime friend, after the spring's final act of violence.

The contributions on the pages immediately succeeding this are by names familiar to all readers of *Fellowship in Prayer*—names of friends which appear in these pages issue after issue. Here they are arranged in repetition for the sake of making a point. The editor's point, in making this repetition, is that *Fellowship in Prayer* more than most publications depends on friends. Its contents are written by friends or are directed to us by the kindness of friends or are culled from the reading of friends.

Our readers also are friends. It is for them that these pages are edited and printed and bound and put in envelopes and stamped and mailed out. And reader-friends write, in turn, to praise or demur, to agree or disagree.

More than a publication, therefore, *Fellowship in Prayer* is in fact what it says it is: a fellowship, a congregation or gathering-together of people with like purposes if often very unlike minds and ways of achieving these purposes.

Considering this fact, many of us are anxious that our fellowship be expanded in several ways. Some desire actual meetings of the fellowship. Some want the fellowship to go on the air, on radio and television, in the hope of enlarging its membership.

Since *Fellowship in Prayer* is only what its membership makes it, there can be no harm in sounding a call. We need many more friends. Friends to write for us. Friends to send us the compositions of their friends. Friends to subscribe for more copies of this bimonthly. Friends to donate more money. Friends of every kind. The more friends we have—and the more friends of different kinds—the more of a fellowship we can be, the more we can do for one another, the more we can pray together in all our different ways. . . .

JOURNEY BEYOND FEAR

Zelma S. Dennis

In our computerized world we still face the unsolved problems of the human soul in life's daily existence. One of the major struggles which cannot be solved by inserting a carefully punched card into a machine is the important factor of our health and emotional state in our day-to-day encounter with the trials of life.

Our physical well-being can be attacked by unseen enemies from within, for which no component parts pre-ordered in a machine can present a remedy. Neither is it possible to promote joy in the human heart when a loved one's life is hanging in the balance. Since these are recognized needs with which science is still unable to provide adequate answers, then we must seek a more fulfilling and satisfying source.

The strange tides of love which flow from the inner spirit of one human to another can be deeply moved by the depression or illness of that beloved person. Life still withholds its

secrets to man's physical problems of complete well being. Fear of death and separation are still valleys of darkness which mortals seem obliged to enter sometimes. That fear is an unreasonable condition almost too great to endure is one of the ageless mysteries of life. Quite often fear for oneself does not have the awesome terror of fear for those we love, and yet we cannot physically remove from either this mantle of darkness.

There is a power available to man if he will seek the knowledge and is willing to release the physical hold of the human mind in order that the divine source may find a receptive circuit through which to work. Divine power like energy in our world must move through an unimpeded channel without the interference of miscellaneous frequencies of doubt. Positive energy is good...negative energy merely obstructs its flow. Fear is the most destructive negative force entertained by human beings.

The serene and uplifting knowledge that good is God... is a sweeping, magnetic power with true healing force. To overcome fear is not an easy thing. To clear away the fog of doubt takes more than the sunshine of one or two hours of positive thinking. There must be an intimate contact with the divine presence, an understanding that permeates the soul that all will be well, and that the ultimate good can be secured.

Fear is an intangible poisonous essence which has the most devastating effect even on persons of strong will and determined minds. Counteracting fear can be achieved by the all-pervading consciousness that through earnest prayer we can know God, who has demonstrated through love that He has conquered death itself.

We can make the journey beyond fear when we remember God working through the miracle of the Christ.

INADEQUATE POEM FOR A SUMMER

Red red reds galore
And white O white so fair.
As robin-souls outpour
Blossoms myrrh the air
Transforming, storming life to give
Absoluteness while they live.

Inadequate:
I'm but a poet, seeing,
Who'd capture rapture
Wildly briefly being
That it, exhausted, live again
In song on lips of other men.

To find the certain perfect words
To make the poem Summer-bright
I'd have to *be* the birds,
I'd have to *be* the white
Magnolia gleaming under sky.
But no: i am only i.

— *Carla Patsuris*

FOOTPRINTS ON THE MOON

Strange echoes spill within the wake
Of earthly steps' uneven pace.
Intruders from a distant sphere
Invade like ghosts this silent place.

The cosmic dust of eons gone
Holds now the print of life-to-be.
Man's silhouete in sun-bright hue
Foretells the shape of destiny.

Once humans crept from earthy cave
Into the light of solar noon,
Now through the ebon void of space
Man marks with primal steps the moon.

Outlined in silver lunar sand
Where shadow of mankind appears,
Historic hieroglyphs now lie
To be translatable in future years.

— *Zelma Swain Dennis*

IF MY PEOPLE. . . .WILL PRAY

Mildred Long

The founding fathers of our country were praying men. They were united in their purposes as they left their homes to establish new homes in a new land. Prayer unified the thinking of the makers of the Constitution. Prayer preserved the vitality and morale of a hard-pressed army fighting for freedom. United in prayer these early fathers accomplished the seemingly impossible.

We recognize the fact that these are crucial days in which we are living. If the hardships and problems of the early days of our history were overcome by prayer, then today's problems can be overcome by the power of prayer.

Let us look at the whole of this quotation: II Chronicles 7:14. "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

God spoke these words to Israel, but we can hear Him speaking the same words to us. "If God be for us who can be against us?" asked Paul. It is true in all ages that if we are on God's side, He is on our side, and we shall not fail or be overcome. So today if we in these United States establish our thinking and living according to God's will, we shall overcome the enemies to our freedom which are alive within our country and outside of it.

Notice what is required: "If

my people. . . .will humble themselves." Humility is a rare virtue even among Christians. To be humble is to acknowledge and confess our sins, submit ourselves to God's will and guidance, give Him the praise and glory, and allow Him to direct our lives. Humility is not self-depreciation. It is rather the acknowledgment both of our weaknesses and our strength. It is the ability to look at ourselves realistically, to submit ourselves wholeheartedly to God, and to put forth our best effort to cooperate with Him, being conscious that it is He who performs the work through us.

Can we humble ourselves?... "And pray, and seek my face." These two go together. For prayer is contact with God. Prayer brings us into His presence and enables us to look upon His face. Prayer is not so much asking something of God as it is giving ourselves to Him. Although petition and intercession form a part of praying, yet in themselves they are not life-transforming for the one who prays. But contact with God, the baring of the soul to His searching light, the seeking His face in humble submission to His will—this is transforming. It is this kind of prayer that is vital. Such praying turns weaklings into men of power and wisdom. This is the kind of praying we need in this crisis hour. And this kind of praying becomes an individual matter.

It is true we offer prayer in our worship services. In many families we pray together. We need to do both of these things more and with greater earnest-

ness and purpose. But the most pressing need today is to learn how to pray effectively for ourselves, each other, and the world. This learning often takes place in the small prayer group.

In these small groups meeting during the week a few people come together to unite their hearts and minds for an hour in seeking God's face and knowing His will. Here there is a sincere search for Truth. Here the Holy Spirit is given some freedom so He may speak to individual hearts. Here each one is challenged to face himself before God and allow God to touch his life and purify his soul's desires. Here a few souls are in unity of spirit and can claim Jesus' promise: "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven." *(Matt. 18:19).*

It is this kind of praying that will transform individual lives and therefore renew our national faith and devotion to God whom we still worship: the God who enabled our forefathers to accomplish the impossible.

And if we pray, what is the promise? "I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

If ever we needed this promise, it is now. Sometimes the ears of heaven seem deaf to our call. We need to be heard. Our nation is honeycombed with sin, torn asunder by violence, breaking of the laws of the land, the moral laws, the spiritual laws. We need tremendously to confess our sins, repent, and receive forgiveness. We need healing. Broken hearts, broken homes, broken bodies, disillusioned minds, disorganized emotions out of control—these are far too numerous in our country. We need healing of soul, mind, and body.

True prayer, true seeking the face of God, is the answer.

Let us then give ourselves anew to God and to His will, to a life of prayer. Then we will have a share with Him in saving this beloved country of ours in these crucial days.

MORNING PRAYER

Father,
Through the unknown day,
Unchartered moments and unlit paths,
Strange to me,
Holy Creator of all knowledge,
Guide me through golden hours.
Amen.

Viola Jacobson Berg

PARTING

Death is not the only taker-away of love.
Self-fulfillment and circumstance
also turn their hand
to wreak this devastation on the heart,
leaving a hurt beyond healing
except in the Hand of God.

To Him, therefore,
we commend you
and the fellowship we've known with you,
trusting to His grace
for light-years of renewal
within His courts.

— *Pollyanna Sedziol*

WEAKNESS

Pollyanna Sedziol

I confess a decided preference
for instruments requiring
action for mastery
  voice
    piano
      violin

I confess a decided annoyance
with instruments requiring
only passive acceptance
  radio
    television
      stereo

The latter being too prone
to assuming mastery
over me.

ODE TO FRESH AIR

Alice Kay Rogers

Ah! Quick prescription for seclusion's ills!
An indiscriminate, you have refills
For cyclic lethargy. Ah! Gentle shock—
You are a brief restrainer to my clock...

HOW TO SMOTHER A GRANDPA

Phyllis Malone

My father was eighty years old when he remarried. He returned from his honeymoon before he told us about his new bride. I suppose he thought his children might object on the grounds of his four-score years. He lived on the West Coast and I lived in the Rocky Mountains. His other children lived even farther away, so he was able to court and marry Stella without anyone being aware of it.

Dad had floundered through four years of battling the kitchen stove, defrosting the old refrigerator, and closing the latch each night on a world of silence, and so I was contented in the knowledge that he was entering a circle of happiness in a second marriage. The fact that he and she were in the gloaming years could yield a beautiful advantage. The initial work, disappointments, resentments and fears of life had been met and overcome. It could be a quiet harmony which required no conversation, only the meeting of the eyes. What difference if those two pair of heavily bespectacled eyes are reamed

with wrinkles? They can still produce a sparkle.

Countless couples have lost their mates in death after many years of marriage. God may offer them another period of apprenticeship: lessons on how to mellow in a new spiritual awareness. A span of loneliness after a longevity of oneness helps a man and woman to value each other in a special way. If the Lord blesses the individual with a meeting of another mate, he is ready for a sweet fulfillment that comes with the wisdom of years of living. As much as I had loved my mother, I did not see another woman striving to match her devotion, but a continuation of love flowing from one Christian mother to another.

The first time I met Stella was seven months after she had married Dad. She had six children of her own and fifteen grandchildren. By marrying Dad, she had acquired three more children and seven grandchildren.

My husband and I had flown by plane to California to attend my twenty-fifth high school reunion. We were operating on a time budget, and we were able to spend only a Sunday afternoon with the newlyweds.

They had planned for the four of us to drive to the next town and have dinner in an especially chosen restaurant. Dad said: "Stella will do the driving, as she doesn't drive as slowly as I do." I was thankful for this, as Dad's pokey driving had made me nervous for years. I wasn't quite prepared for Stella at the wheel. She glided the station wagon down the driveway and out into the street in a very smooth methodical manner. When we reached the highway, my husband and I clutched our seat belts. We darted by a twenty-five-mile zone sign. I noticed that the speedometer was whipping up to the fifty-five-mile-an-hour mark. I wished she would stop looking back over her shoulder when she spoke to us. Dad didn't seem upset, and I decided that he must be well adjusted to her driving. We drove the five miles in record time. I didn't regain my appetite until

the car was parked.

Dinner was delightful and they wanted to introduce us to some of their new friends during the afternoon. It was an interesting afternoon. Their associates couldn't wait to tell me that Dad and Stella were meant for each other. Everyone seemed to share a personal interest in their happiness.

At the end of the day we stomped to a stop in front of a tree-lined yard and Dad said: "I really braced myself, honey. Thank goodness you missed that last tree." They both laughted heartily. I laughed too, but not for the same reason.

During the short time we had been with them, we could see the constant exchange of tenderness. Lessons, through goneby years had been learned in forgiveness, compassion, and tolerance, and had now been condensed into graduation exercises. They were both valedictarians of their class. They were blazing a trail together. If the end of the journey happened to be closer than they realized, it made no difference. Together they had unlocked a gate into a new venture. I felt thankful for all of these blessings. It filled my spirit with a serene satisfaction.

Two months later, Dad and Stella took a trip to visit some of their children. The foremost reason for the trek was to see Stella's oldest son who was hospitalized and very ill. There is no sound to a breaking heart, but there is a lilt to a heart that is yielded to God. This described Stella. Her soul was like a launching pad. She could catapult the feeling of God's hope and mercy in all directions.

One Sunday during their sojourn, we went to a German restaurant for dinner. Dad began to relate a few stories concerning the gentlemen who had been determined to win Stella, and how persistent he had had to be to become the victor. Stella retaliated with some similar stories about charming widows who had loved to invite Dad to their homes for gourmet meals and a comfortable atmosphere.

We laughed continually throughout dinner.

The very young do not have a monopoly on the risk of romance. The older generation can find the contest full of merriment and fun. Their game is more of a filtering process, maybe a little slower, but very steadfast.

Their visit to us was during the summer. Vacation time at our house meant that everyone prepared their own breakfast and ate their meals at different times of the morning. Dad and Stella had a precious ritual at their first meal of the day. They clasped hands, repeated the Lord's Prayer together, Stella gave the blessing, and they kissed each other. Again I was thankful for God's endearing concern for each of His children.

Dad's friends were right. Dad and Stella were meant for each other. Grandpa was smothered with love.

MY PRAYER

Floyd S. Barrett

When I's aleanen an bout to tumble,
When I's a shaken an feelin humble,
When de cold wind am a howlin so wild,
Don't You forget, Lord, dat I is Yo child.

Send me de Spirit, so faithful and strong,
Prop me up, Lord, as I struggle along,
Keep thou my feet in de straight, narrow way,
Hold tight my hand, Lord, lest from you I stray.

A FATHER'S PRAYER

Viola Jacobson Berg

Help me to walk clean before my family, Lord,
To live victoriously through my day, protected by Your sword and Your shield,
Enabled by Your Spirit to make decisions in the light of Your wisdom and holiness,
To find the paths that are straight, and to keep my feet upon the Solid Rock,
To accept humbly that You have for me, whether it is joy or sorrow,
As a part of Your plan and pattern for my life,
That I might learn the lessons of trust, and patience and obedience,
And feel more of your depth, Your love, and Your nearness,
With eyes to see Your glory, and with ears to hear You speak to me,
That I might live before my family, those You have given me, as a clean instrument,
Through which You can channel Your will for all of us.
Help me to walk clean before my family, Lord.

UNDERSTANDING

Mildred Long

I have an understanding with the hills:
Their feet sunk deep in the heart of mother earth,
Their heads, snow-crowned, wind-swept, where faith
instills
Patience and endurance proving worth.

I have an understanding with the sea:
I feel the inner surge in some lone hour
That breaks me on the shore and causes me
To retreat and rest in the bosom of hidden power.

I have an understanding with the bird,
Nestling safe with covered head on a bough.
I know the certainty of the Voice it heard—
Trusting strong wings and God's Eternal Now.

CHRIST AND CHINESE CULTURAL HERITAGE

Part II

The Rev. Canon S. K. Lee

Ch'an Buddhism: Meditation and Art

Though Hinayana Buddhism was first introduced to China, it was Mahayana Buddhism that had taken deep root in Chinese soil. After the fifth century, most of the Chinese translations of Buddhist scriptures were Mahayana. The Mahayana teaches that salvation is open to all men, through faith and works and that to suffer in the cause of love is better than to release oneself from suffering through self-extinction. Thus one of its characteristics is the teaching that a bodhisattva, though qualified to enter Nirvanda, would voluntarily renounce this privilege in order to remain with suffering mankind and work for their salvation. Ambitabha, for example, refused to become a buddha except on the condition that he could share his vast treasure of merits with others. Comparable to this is the contemporary counterpart of Simone Weil with her strong sense of identification with suffering humanity. She resolved to refrain from accepting baptism lest she should find herself enjoying a spiritual privilege which might separate her from those who were outside the Christian Church.

Among the various Mahayana sects, it was Ch'an (Zen) Buddhism that appealed most to the Chinese mind. By the end of the seventh century, it was moulded into its indigenous Chinese form through the work of the Sixth Patriarch Hui-Neng. According to Ch'an Buddhism, all living beings possess the Buddha-nature and all may attain Buddhahood by sudden enlightenment. Enlightenment comes when the mind has been cleansed of all wandering thoughts and up-

lifted to the realm of pure essence. It is, of course, the common experience of Christian mystics, of a Ramon Lull, a Meister Eckhart or a Nicholas of Cusa.

There was a tendency for Ch'an Buddhists to do away with all externals. Monks would contemplate in the setting of a blank wall. They would discard images and even scriptures. To them one mystical experience may become of greater value than years of intellectual study. Indeed as the First Patriarch was reported to have said, "There is a special transmission outside the Scriptures. There should be no dependence upon letters or words." Yet paradoxically enough, Ch'an monasteries, as Dr. Hu Shih pointed out, "were the great centres of philosophical speculation and discussion through the ninth and tenth centuries." By that time ritual was re-introduced. The Ch'an had become the predominient Buddhist sect. Then their monasteries "came to take up the older rituals and worship which they, as publicly supported institutions, were now expected to perform."

But it is the influence of Ch'an Buddhism on Chinese culture, and in particular, on Chinese art that arrests our attention. The Ch'an Buddhists believe that through sudden enlightenment one may penetrate into the heart of the universe. They are, however, determined to let no mystical experience pass without a record. Now the illumination which flashes across the mirror of one's soul is duly recorded in a drawing or a poem. A whole school of art, notably in the Sung Dynasty, thus flourished under Ch'an influence. In their works, the Ch'an artists tried to penetrate beneath outward appearances and show the Buddha-hood or the Divinity which is in all things.

Of all Western artists the one who came closest to the spirit of Ch'an paintings was, perhaps, Rembrandt. He too would like to record his sudden illumination and put it down at once in his pen-

drawings. Though his drawings, as the late Eric Newton suggested, were done in a furious tempo "lest the original stimulus shall evaporate before the statement had been made," they are the fruits of years of meditation and brooding over the scriptures. Likewise, Ch'an paintings or drawings were inspired by the contemplative life and the artists' statements were seldom complete. They evoke a mood. They open a door to further contemplation.

Chinese Traditions and Christian Faith

Ours is an age of crisis. As Prof. Arnold Toynbee observed "We have for a number of generations past been living on spiritual capital, I mean clinging to Christian practice without possessing the Christian belief—and practice unsupported by belief is a wasting asset, as we have suddenly discovered to our dismay in this generation." Prof. Toynbee touched a responsive chord in the hearts of many Confucian scholars who would like to see a resurgence of Confucian ideals as an antidote to our merely materialistic and technological culture.

People often speak of our time as post-Christian. But surely the spirit of God can also speak through modern science and secular civilization. Indeed modern society, with all its new facilities, might be made to mirror the conditions of the Kingdom of God. Furthermore, Christianity in its encounter with Oriental religions may be expected to enter into a new period of theological insights. It is possible that as under the Roman Empire, a Justin or a Clement of Alexandria drew out of Greco-Roman culture the heart of what was best in classical antiquity, so the spread of the Gospel in the Far East may bring out what is relevant from the rich treasury of Chinese traditions.

We may even borrow Father Danielou's arresting phrase for Islam and apply it to Confucianism and declare that it is an incomplete Christianity and that we may try to extend it into Christian

completion. Thus the eminent statesman of the late Ming Dynasty, Li Chih-tsao, on reading Ricci's book on the True Doctrine of God was amazed to find the striking resemblance between the Christian worship of God and the Confucian worship of Heaven. The only difference, he noted, between the two religions was the Doctrine of Heaven and Hell. Even there he conceded that the doctrine, though not explicitly stated, was implied in the Confucian idea of rewarding the virtuous and punishing the wicked. Likewise, Chang Tzu-shen of the early Ch'ng Dynasty, upon his conversion to Christianity, was criticized by his friends as having deserted his ancestral faith and embraced a western religion. Chang retorted by saying that it was he who was the true Confucianist. In his book, *A Clear Exposition of the Heavenly Religion,* (1711) he said, "As Confucius venerated Heaven, I too venerate Heaven. As Confucius and Mencius attacked heresies, I too attack Buddhism and the teaching of Lao Tzu . . . . People, alas, do not know that the Heavenly Religion is Confucian. Still less do they know that the Heavenly Religion is the completion of Confucianism." True, these early Catholic converts in their enthusiastic outbursts had overlooked the gap between the Christian faith and the Chinese traditions, yet one may agree that there are characteristics in Chinese religions that have strong affinities with Christianity. The question naturally arises if this will affect the uniqueness of Christ. To answer this question, one may go back to the wisdom of the late Prof. C. S. Lewis. In his little classic *Reflections on the Psalms* he wrote "The whole religious history of the pre-Christian world, on its better side, anticipates Christ. It could not be otherwise. The Light which has lighted every man from the beginning may shine more clearly but cannot change. The Origin cannot suddenly start being, in the popular sense of the word 'original.'"

Signposts on The Way

Christ, the Eternal Tao, is the author of all beauty and all

truth. In what ways then have the Chinese religions prepared the way for the coming of the Eternal Word? Let us attempt to trace a few signposts on the way.

(I) Attunement to Heaven.

All lovers of Chinese art will testify to the artists' devotion to nature. To them the beauty and splendor of the world, the trees and valleys, the distant view of a mountain, are all visible manifestations of the working of the universal Ming. In Chinese landscape paintings, one seems to discern a dialogue between Nature and the Soul. The Chinese people have a distinct feeling of oneness with Nature. There is, however, not only beauty in the world around us. The order of the universe is essentially moral. It is man's duty to be conformed with that order. If man's life is attuned to Heaven, he can find that Heaven is trustworthy. No doubt this belief had served to prepare the Chinese people for the acceptance of the Christian message. Christians too believe that we must be reconciled to God, that we are working in harmony with Reality, which at its deepest level, is *jen* or love.

(II) Family-Piety.

The family has been an important institution in many countries but it is doubtful if it has anywhere been more important than in China. The Chinese family is democratic in function. There is subordination among members of the family, but each has his place and each has his dignity. "A young man" said Confucius "should be treated with the utmost respect. How do you know he will not, one day, be fully equal of what you are now?" If the father has the supreme authority in the household, he must also shoulder the supreme responsibility. The family has been the pattern on which the State is based.

But one may ask: Is the Chinese family system breaking

down? Are the Chinese people, both at home and abroad, living in a post-Confucian era? True, a trip to Shatin or Taipo will convince one that the ancestral temple is still the centre of village life and in many Far-Eastern Cities the Chinese New Year festivities are still the bond of family love. Yet the ancestral temples may go with the march of time. What remains will probably be the tradition of family piety which for a long time to come will still be the corner-stone of Chinese society.

From the adoration of one's ancesters it is only a step to the veneration of the saints and sages. Dr. S. C. Carpenter, formerly Dean of Exeter, for one, realized the importance of family-piety to the communication of the Christian message. "They (the Chinese people, had been groping after the truth, if happily they might find it. The family piety, even the ancestral cult of China, would itself help them to understand better the Christian teaching about the communion of saints."

(III) History and Example.

The sense of history is one of the most striking features of Chinese culture. Confucian thought is never divorced from history. Mencius said "Heaven does not speak. The only thing it does is to reveal by deeds and events." In the development of history, the Chinese people learn to trace the Hand of God. In Buddhism, however, there is sometimes the danger of relegating the Gautama of history to a status of secondary importance. Christians too may face the same peril. But our faith fortunately anchors in history and we are constantly reminded by the Creed that our Lord had suffered under Pontius Pilate.

Furthermore, Chinese religions are interwoven with ethics. Confucius believed that human-heartedness can reform, if not change, the world. He laid great emphasis on the force of example.

It is interesting to note that Bonhoeffer in like manner reminded the Church "She must not underestimate the importance of human example . . . . It is not abstract argument, but concrete example which gives her word emphasis and power!"

Charity, the Confucianists insist, is contagious. A virtuous life is important precisely because it radiates its light far and wide. But to whom can we turn for a supreme example—a pattern that we must follow? Christians would say that in Christ man sees both his image and his hope. To be conformed with Christ is to realize man's true nature.

No one who looks up to our Lord will fail to see His extraordinary capacity to give and spend Himself for others. In Him we find an astonishing harmony of word and deed. From his compelling life and passion we learn that the heart of the universe is not only moral but love. Thus the Chinese translation of St. John's Gospel begins thus: "In the beginning was the Tao, and the Tao was with God and the Tao was God." In Christ, the Eternal Tao made flesh, the history of the human spirit, we believe, is brought to its consummation.

— *from CHING FENG*

* * * *

"These present times are really not at all bad though some old fashioned ideas are apt to make us see the progress of the world as if everything were upside down."

* * * *

"Things go wrong in order to show us that it is God's will that we should change them. That is the real truth."

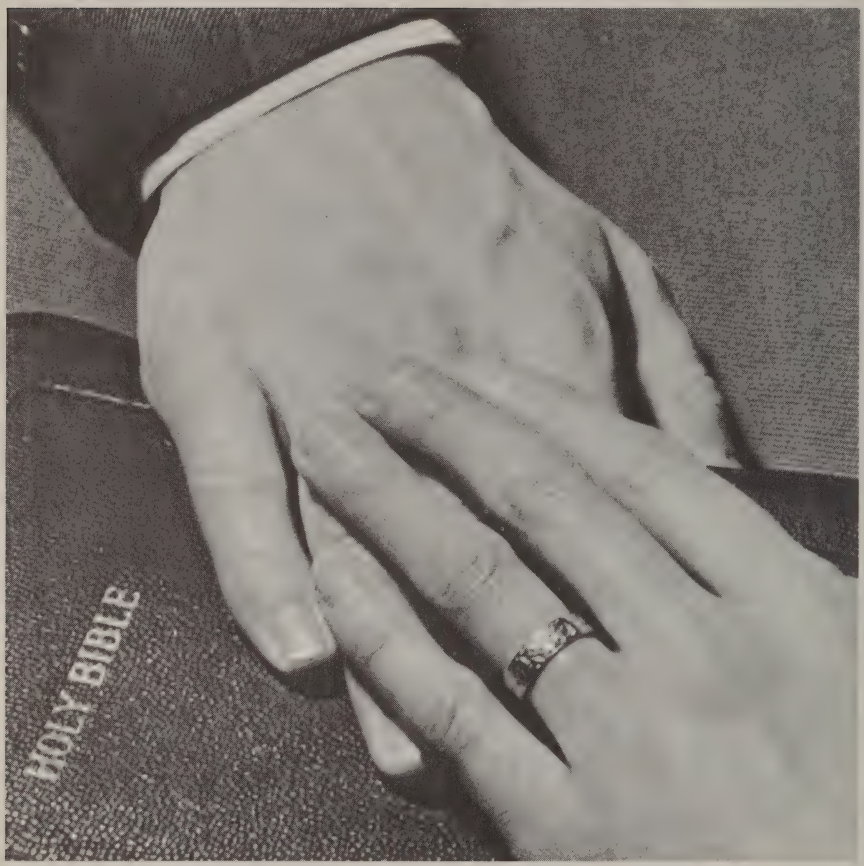
Wise Counsel of Abbe DeTourville

HELL ON EARTH

Amy Carol Beard

We have to live with ourselves—
Could a guilty conscience make that easier—
Knowing hell is here with us?
Or—
Will a helping hand to a friend
Eradicate from our conscience that time
You withdrew it?

Can we be so selfish—
Just to live our own life?
Should we have to care about troubles
Hell on earth gives to others?
Or is
Heaven always a reward—
in the Hereafter?



LOVE AND MARRIAGE

Eric Butterworth

It may well be that the greatest problem in America today, and the one which poses the greatest threat to our time, is the problem of the breakdown of the home, the slow deterioration of marriages and their ultimate dissolution in all-too-frequent divorce. The real heroes of our society are not the soldiers, statesmen, and scientists, but the individuals who maintain in the quiet retreat of simple homes the qualities and standards of a civilized race.

Here are four important considerations for people contemplating marriage and an inventory for those already married:

In marriage not only two individuals come together but two worlds. The self that one brings to marriage is much more than the personality that expresses love in courtship. It is the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual makeup of the individual. Beyond this there is a coming together of what we might call the "expanded personality" of two people. This is made up of the habits, skills, possessions, equipment, dreams, memories, friendships, family ties, and religious beliefs. It is vitally important that before marriage people really get to know one another. The majority of people who get married do not really know each other, they simply love each other. On this level love is often an emotional thing which blinds the individual to the world of the one loved. "Let's get acquainted."

Happiness in marriage is not a bequest, but a conquest. The fiction and scenario writers are responsible for the myth that the struggle precedes marriage, and that when we walk through the portals of matrimony we live happily ever after. People feel they are mismated when they do not find ready-made happiness on the other side of the threshhold. We have no more right to expect happiness of marriage than to expect it while unmarried. Happiness depends on that which is within us. Thus success in marriage is much more than finding the right person, it is being the right person. The statement most commonly heard prior to marriage is "falling in love." Romance is Nature's overture to marriage. But this is no more marriage than an acorn is an oak tree. The only hopes of a successful marriage is a complete recovery from "falling in love," and "rising in love" through the process of growing spiritually as a person.

Divorce enters into every successful marriage. There can be

no success in marriage until the partners each get a divorce from self. Selfishness is at the root of all marriage problems. We often hear the statement that this or that marriage failed. It is not marriage that fails. It is people that fail. All that marriage does is to reveal hidden forms of selfishness. Far too many people approach marriage with a romantic and egocentric attitude, full of daydreams which are concerned with getting. Never with giving. So often the three little words, "I love you," might mean only "I love me, and I want you for myself." Love is a universal phenomenon which we mistakenly feel has its source in ourselves and its satisfaction in others. Actually love has its source in God and its satisfaction in expression. True love is not dependent upon acknowledgment or reciprocation. It gives of itself freely and it blesses the giver for the giving.

Love in marriage is a prophetic vision. Marriage, in the highest sense, is a consecration of two people to the wonderful task of helping each other to become in manifestation what love has revealed that they can be. Love enables the individual to see something of the possibilities that lie within the object of his love. Those entering into marriage should realize that the one they love, the one that inspires them to poetry, is not the manifest individual at all. The one they love is the one that is to be when the inner possibility becomes the outer reality. Shakespeare said, "Love is not love which alters when it alteration finds." The task does not consist in finding the lovable object; but of finding the object already given or chosen lovable, and in continuing to find him lovable however changed he may be. Let us hide in our inmost self the image of that prophetic vision, for this provides the master plan and the directing influence of the marriage through the years.

Let us dig a little deeper beyond the sandy soil of human differences to the bed-rock of stability and spiritual treasure. "Love never faileth."

THANK YOU, GOD!

Velta Myrle Allen

Thank you, God, for night and day
And the privilege to pray.
Thank you for the strength I know
When your Presence sends a glow
    Of love and quietness in peace.

Thank you, God, for every friend
And their goodness without end.
Thank you for each lovely minute
Filled with love and joy within it.
    Grant me, God, they never cease!

THE GREAT ARTIST

Velta Myrle Allen

The painful struggles
which beset our path
in sorrow, grief, or unhappiness—
Are but the tools
of God's crucible
to strengthen the heart for its progress.

Without the chisel
the marble is naught—
Without the plow
there's no garden spot.
So there's always an agent
of the Creator above
to wield the clay
    in beauty and love.

THE POWER OF WORDS

W. J. Thompson

"Thy speech betrayeth thee"—These dramatic words were addressed to Peter as he sat in the outer court of the high priest's residence in Jerusalem, where he had followed Jesus

Peter was seated near the Levitical guards, who had brought Jesus to this place. The men were seeking the welcome heat of a fire which had been built nearby, as the nights in Jerusalem are quite cold. And as Peter sat in the light of the charcoal fire, a maid passing by saw him, and recognized him as a follower of Jesus. Peter vigorously denied her accustion. But one thing proved the maid was right! A Galilean could not easily pronounce the gutturals of ordinary Aramaic; and the men around Peter, after listening to his denial of Jesus, said to him, "Thy speech betrayeth thee."

I find in that striking statement a message of divine significance. Here is a declaration that speech is a revelation of character. The gift of speech is one of the distinguishing marks of our humanity. Birds and beasts are capable of articulation, but they cannot discourse. Language is the great barrier between man and beast. Speech is God's gift to humanity, and it is not merely the mark of manhood and womanhood, it is also the evidence of our mentality. God gave man speech just as He gave him reason. The Greek language has one word for them both!

We cannot fathom the mystery of language. What is there in words that enables them to unlock the gates of the mind, enter the secret chamber of the soul, and set the bells of memory ringing?

The power of words is amazing. I have known one word, whispered in the ear of a man, to break his stubborn will and bring him penitent to God! I have known a single sentence,

spoken to a discouraged man, to act upon him like a miraculous tonic, dispelling despair and sending him forth confident and courageous—"A new creature in Christ"!

Why a certain group of sounds produced by the lips and the teeth and the tongue should prove to be a direct avenue to the gladness and grief of life, I do not know. But I know that speech is something which can express tender tones of love, and speech can also utter savage and diabolical hatred. Speech can bind people together in bonds of lasting brotherhood; and speech can drive men worlds apart. Speech has power to lift a person to heights of radiant hope or plunge him deep in the abyss of despair!

Speech is a marvelous power for good—and evil. And Because of this, let us be specially careful in the use of words.

Let us never forget these four words—Thy speech betrayeth thee." Spoken centuries ago, they are as modern as this present hour. Oh, be careful of your words and *how* you utter them.

Years ago, while of a city church, I was also preacher in a great institution for blind people, and those folk taught me a lesson I cannot forget—namely, that men and women everywhere unwittingly reveal their true selves through the medium of the voice and their speech. It is praise not fault-finding that men and women and youth need today. All around us are people hungering for a word of appreciation and encouragement, and such action on our part can being blessings beyond our dreams. It is a glorious day for all concerned when we can say—I will be kind in my speech, helpful in my statements, and will take care that even the tone of voice shall convey the assurance of sincere interest in others, with genuine fellowship, crowned with the conscious presence of the Lord!

NOTICES and COMMENTS

NEW TRUSTEE. Mr. Roland Gammon of New York City has been elected a trustee of Fellowship in Prayer. Religious editor, lecturer and public relations specialist and president of Editorial Communications, Inc., Mr. Gammon has already been introduced to the fellowship when a section of his most recent book *A God For Modern Man* was published in last February's issue. At present he is working on a study of the world's fifty greatest leaders and their philosophies of life, which will be titled *All Believers Are Brothers.* His articles have appeared in numerous national magazines. He is a graduate of Colby College and Oxford University, a member of Phi Beta Kappa, Kappa Delta Rho, The Overseas Press Club, The Society of Magazine Writers, Religious Newswriters Association, and The American Veterans Committee. From 1955 to 1962 he served as president of the National Association of Unitarian-Universalist Men. A man of such wide commitment and activity will certainly bring much of great value to the fellowship.

NEW ADVISOR. Miss Virginia J. Tirado, Coordinating Executive Director of the Fellowship of Churches and Synagogues, Inc., has kindly accepted our invitation to act as advisor in the Eastern Zone. In the early 1960's, Miss Tirado, inspired by the words of Pope John XXIII, founded the fellowship, which now consists of fifty-four Protestant churches, ten Roman Catholic cathedrals, one Greek Orthodox cathedral, and four Reform Jewish synagogues in Manhattan. Her purpose: the gathering-together of a group of women to discuss and practice actively the teachings of their faiths. It seems only natural that she and *Fellowship in Prayer,* whose aims are so similar, should become steadfast friends.

LIBRARY NOTES. We are grateful to Mr. Frank A. Mastropaolo for his gift to the Fellowship Library of the following books:

GOLD DUST by Charlotte M. Yonge
DAILY HELP by Charles H. Spurgeon
THE GREATEST THING IN THE WORLD by Henry Drummond
DAILY LIGHTS ON THE DAILY PATH by Louis Klopsch
IN HIS STEPS by Charles M. Sheldon
MORNING AND EVENING THOUGHTS by James Allen
AS A MAN THINKETH by James Allen
THE UNDERSTANDING HEART compiled by Louise Bachelder

Also we are grateful to Miss Mabel B. Peck for a copy of her book, YOU ARE THAT.

PRIZE WINNER. "Footprints On The Moon," the poem by Zelma S. Dennis, which is printed on page 7 of this issue, won the "Golden Pegasus" award—for the top poem—at the Chaparral Convention. "It was a complete surprise," writes the author, "and really I was overwhelmed."

BACK ISSUES NEEDED. In order to complete a set of *Fellowship in Prayer* from Volume I to date for the Special Collections Library of Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island, we need the issues of June 1950, April 1951, and February 1963. If anyone has any of these numbers and can spare them, please get in touch with us.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES. FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER is published six times a year at the rate of $3.00. Special rates are available for additional copies and back issues.

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SOARING SKYWARD

As a bird escaped from the fowler's snare
soars skyward in search of freedom
so man's soul liberated from
the pitfalls of deception
rises to heights of things not tangible.
In a never-ending search for Peace
it cleaves the surrounding darkness
and illumines the disheartening shadows
as effortless as sunlight
sinks into a tranquil pool.

— *Catherine Cabeen Houck*

"For a world united in prayer"

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